

# Yosemite National Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Why are archeologists working in Yosemite Valley?

Physical remains of American Indian culture in Yosemite Valley date back some 6,000 years. Non-Indian use of the Valley provides a historic record of approximately 150 years, beginning in 1851. Archeologists find and use the remains of human activity to decipher facts about the past. Recovered artifacts, remnant buildings (see photograph), and historical records reveal stories of Yosemite's past occupants and their culture. As part of its responsibilities to manage natural and cultural resources, Yosemite National Park will examine archeological remains to determine their overall significance.

## What archeological work is currently being conducted in Yosemite Valley?

Archeologists under contract with the NPS will conduct test excavations at twelve site locations in Yosemite Valley in 2006 and 2007. You might see archeologists excavating pits, sifting soil, and recovering historic and prehistoric artifacts and items of interest. Visitors are welcome to ask questions, observe artifacts, and view historical photographs. Be aware of where you are standing and maintain a safe distance between you and an excavated pit. For each site, archeologists pose different questions in an attempt to understand the time period when people occupied the area. The selected sites reflect a wide variety of past human use spanning the ages of human occupation in the Valley. Historic archeological research will examine the remains of the Stoneman Hotel (1886 to 1896), Kennyville stables complex (1888 to 1925) prior to construction of The Ahwahnee (1927), the first site of the LeConte Lodge (1903-1919), and early trash deposits related to Curry Village. Prehistoric archeological research will examine archeological sites containing milling stations, stone tools made of obsidian, and other cultural items that are preserved in the ground. Field work will include the use of ground-penetrating radar that may detect archeological features including the remains of buildings, trails, roads, and privies below the surface. These studies will provide important information for evaluating the research potential at each site location.



## What role will American Indian groups play in this project?

American Indian use and traditional practices in the Valley continues to the present-day. Archeological excavations can be controversial to some individuals and groups. Throughout this project, a representative from the American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc. will monitor excavations. American Indian groups, culturally associated with the Park, consulted with the NPS in this project's development. If human remains are discovered, formal consultations with these groups will commence. Visitors are welcome to ask tribal representatives questions about cultural resources.

## How can you help preserve archeological resources in Yosemite and other places?

The most important thing to remember is that archeological resources are irreplaceable. Archeologists learn from artifacts and sites when they are left in place. The inter-relationship of objects, or how they are situated on the landscape, is often more important than the objects themselves. Please help to preserve Yosemite's past by leaving objects as you found them.

***Archeological resources are protected by federal legislation. It is illegal to damage, deface or remove archeological objects or features from federal lands.***